Inclusivity, Diversity & Cultural Competency Policy

Approved By: Executive Director
Applies To: Board members, staff, volunteers, practicum students, and service providers

1. Purpose

To ensure CMS services, communications, and partnerships are inclusive, culturally respectful, and responsive to the diverse communities we serve. This policy sets expectations for culturally competent and accessible practice across all CMS roles.

2. Alignment

This policy supports CMS's values of dignity, equity, and accessibility and aligns with:

- CMS Bylaws
- CMS Privacy Policies
- Service Provider Standards & Responsibilities
- Alberta Human Rights Act
  Where conflict exists, provincial and federal legislation prevails.

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3. Policy Statement

CMS is committed to providing an inclusive and respectful environment for all individuals regardless of culture, ethnicity, language, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, family structure, socioeconomic status, or immigration status.
We recognize end-of-life decisions are shaped by cultural and personal traditions and will honour these differences whenever possible.

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4. Key Definitions

Inclusivity: Creating welcoming, respectful environments.
Diversity: Recognizing the wide range of identities and experiences within our community.
Cultural Competency: Understanding and responding appropriately to cultural beliefs and practices.
Cultural Humility: Ongoing reflection, learning, and openness when supporting others.

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5. CMS Commitments

5.1 Equitable Service Delivery

- Respect member wishes and cultural or spiritual practices.
- Provide consistent, compassionate support.
- Where feasible, offer planning tools that reflect diverse traditions.

5.2 Accessible Communication

- Use clear, plain language.
- Provide translated materials when possible.
- Ensure member-facing content reflects a diverse community.

5.3 Cultural Respect & Identity Affirmation

- Honour chosen names, pronouns, and identities.
- Work with service providers to ensure culturally responsive and 2SLGBTQIA+-affirming practices.

5.4 Inclusive Outreach & Learning

- Engage with cultural, community, seniors, and settlement organizations.
- Encourage ongoing learning about grief, rituals, and decision-making across cultures.

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6. Expectations for CMS Representatives

All CMS staff, volunteers, and board members must:

- Treat every person with dignity and respect.
- Avoid assumptions about cultural or family practices.

- Ask respectful questions when clarification is needed.
- Use chosen names and pronouns.
- Provide information in culturally sensitive, accessible ways.
- Challenge bias or discriminatory behaviour.
- Seek support from the ED when additional cultural knowledge is needed.

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7. Expectations for Funeral Service Providers

Service providers must:

- Offer respectful, culturally informed care.
- Honour members' documented preferences.
- Avoid discriminatory practices.
- Support cultural or religious rituals when operationally feasible.

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8. Inclusive Practices in Member Support

8.1 Communication & Language Access

- Provide translations when possible.
- Use technology tools when needed.
- Maintain accessible, plain-language forms and materials where feasible.

8.2 Cultural Rituals & Preferences

- Support members in documenting cultural rituals.
- Communicate these preferences clearly to service providers.
- Include culturally diverse examples in CMS presentations.

8.3 Decision-Making Structures

- Respect members' identified representatives, including family, elders, or spiritual leaders.

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9. Reporting Concerns

Concerns about discrimination or culturally insensitive behaviour may be reported to:

- Executive Director
- Membership Services Coordinator
- Board Chair (if appropriate)

Concerns will be addressed under CMS's Complaints & Service Resolution and Privacy Policies.

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10. Responsibilities

Executive Director

- Leads implementation and training
- Works with service providers to resolve concerns
- Ensures materials remain inclusive

Membership Services Coordinator

- Provides accessible support
- Helps document member preferences
- Identifies barriers

Board of Directors

- Models inclusive governance
- Supports related strategic goals

Volunteers & Practicum Students

- Follow inclusive practices where feasible
- Raise concerns when support is needed

Service Providers

- Deliver culturally respectful services
- Collaborate on training and improvements

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11. Continuous Improvement

CMS will review this policy regularly to reflect member demographics, feedback, service provider input, and emerging best practices. Inclusivity and cultural competency are ongoing commitments.